

Mary Jane Willes Gilchrist

1850-1950 Centennial Biography

Mary Jane Willes Gilchrist was born in Lehi, Utah January 22, 1853, a daughter of William Sidney Smith and Alzina Lucinda Lott Willes. She was the oldest of nine children. When she was eighteen, her father died. Her mother having ill health, the burden of the family fell on her shoulders.

She was of a fearless nature, running in front of a runaway team to rescue two small cousins standing right in the path of the team.

Once in her teens, she had quite an experience with an indian brave. He gave her a bracelet and insisted she put it on and then left. Her father, hearing of the incident and knowing indian customs became alarmed. The indians and her friends returned to claim her as his bride, and much choice food was given to change his mind and make him take back the bracelet.

Mary Jane married Robert T. Gilchrist October 6, 1874 in the Endowment House. They had seven daughters and three sons, all three sons preceded her in death. She also reared a grandson.

She was of a very generous nature. Her limited means, while raising a family, were stretched to great lengths. She was a wonderful neighbor, helping many in case of sickness and distress.

She was active in church work, taught primary for many years and was Primary President for a time. For eighteen years, she was a Relief Society District Teacher and served on the Old Folks Committee.

She died April 20, 1836 at the age of eighty-four.